



## State Of Connecticut

SENATE  
STATE CAPITOL  
HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT 06106-1591

Senator Donald E. Williams, Jr.  
Senate President Pro Tempore

**Spoken**  
**3/25/13**

On

SB 5 – An Act Concerning Changes to Campaign Finance Laws

Committee on GAE

March 25, 2013

Since the U.S. Supreme Court's ruling in Citizens United, we've watched an explosion of undisclosed special interest money pour into contested elections throughout our country. In 2012, here in our state, more than \$500,000 was spent in the form of Independent Expenditures on our State Senate races. A good amount of those expenditures were financed, essentially, through unknown sources. Yes, these sources had names, but they were ambiguous names like "Americans for Job Security," or "American Justice Partnership." Nobody really knows who is funding those entities, and that lack of transparency is unacceptable. The public deserves to know who is trying to influence their votes.

The large amount of money and the lack of transparency associated with influencing campaigns, in a mostly negative tone, strikes a blow at the integrity of our electoral system, and it also continues to erode the public's enthusiasm for our elections.

SB 5, An Act Concerning Changes to Campaign Finance Laws, increases disclosure requirements and adds more transparency to our campaign finance system. It also promotes a more even playing field for candidates by giving party committees and political caucuses more ability to assist campaigns, particularly when unlimited money can play such a pivotal role in our elections.

This current draft mirrors the bill that was passed by the legislature last year with two exceptions. First, the overseas military voting provision from last year's bill is not in this draft. Second, the most controversial section in last year's bill, the requirement that any incorporated entity with a board of governance must gain the board's approval before making any campaign related expenditure over \$4,000. Both of these issues were mentioned in the Governor's veto message. Additionally, it is clear in this draft that newspapers hosting debates, and other events

of that nature, are not considered campaign expenditures and therefore will not be an issue, as the Governor also referenced in his message.

The bill also clarifies some of the current intent within our statutes, updates campaign contributions from individuals to party committees and caucuses, makes technical fixes and cleans up language.

We know that, unfortunately, Pandora's Box has been opened in our state when it comes to unlimited special interest money being spent to influence our state elections. It is essential that we, at least, ensure this flow of special interest money is fully disclosed.